



## NEWS RELEASE

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**Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance Reaches \$500,000  
in Research Grants Awarded in Michigan**  
*On World Ovarian Cancer Day, MIOCA Announces 2019 research recipients*

ANN ARBOR, MI - On World Ovarian Cancer Day, the Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MIOCA) announces an important milestone in its effort to save lives. Since it started giving grants in 2014, MIOCA has now awarded over a half-million dollars to researchers in Michigan who are finding new ways to improve the early detection and treatment of ovarian cancer.

“MIOCA is pleased to announce three 2019 Geri Fournier Ovarian Cancer Research Award winners, who will each receive \$50,000 as part of our efforts to forward ovarian cancer research in our state.” said MIOCA Founder and President, Pam Dahlmann. The Award, named for the Founders’ mother who helped establish MIOCA before her death from ovarian cancer in 2011, was created to recognize the critical research happening right here, in our state, which is often underfunded. “Each and every research project we fund has the potential to result in improved understanding of the disease that will hopefully transform lives for women across Michigan and beyond.”

The State of Michigan is fortunate to have several of the nations’ top ovarian cancer researchers, and this year’s winners represent three institutions who are leading the way in ovarian cancer research. This year’s winners are:

- Rebecca Liu, M.D, Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center  
Michigan Cancer Research Consortium  
"EASE: Education, Alliance, Solace, and Empowerment for Ovarian Cancer Patients."
- Nouri Neamati, Ph.D., University of Michigan College of Pharmacy, and  
Karen McLean, M.D., Ph.D., University of Michigan Medical School, University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center  
"Development of STAT3 inhibitors for the treatment of ovarian cancer."
- John Risinger, Ph.D., Michigan State University College of Human Medicine  
"PARP inhibition and non-BRCA DNA damage repair mutation."

- more -

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Despite its low survival rates and the lack of a screening tool for the disease, a recent study found that research for gynecological cancers, including ovarian cancer, is the most underfunded when compared to other cancers including breast, testicular, leukemias, and kidney. The latest round of research grants was approved by MIOCA's Board of Directors following careful deliberations and analysis, and recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to ovarian cancer including new clinical treatments as well as new approaches to patient education and support.

Past awards have helped support the infrastructure and momentum of ovarian cancer research in Michigan. "I had the honor of first receiving this grant just when I moved into my own laboratory space at the University of Michigan. The award allowed me to study new aspects of ovarian cancer unique from my work with my mentors, building critical research independence. With the results from this grant support, my team recently published one ovarian cancer research paper, and this work is building the foundation for both an additional paper and federally-funded grant submissions." shares Karen McLean, M.D., Ph.D., University of Michigan Medical School.

Ovarian cancer is the most lethal of gynecological cancers and the fifth leading cause of cancer related deaths in women. The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2019, about 22,530 new cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed, and 13,980 women will die from the disease in the United States. It is also estimated that 730 new cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed in Michigan in 2019, and 490 women will die from the disease. There have been modest gains in survival rates for ovarian cancer over the past few decades, but the cure rate has not changed. Due to the lack of an early detection test, only 15% of ovarian cancer is diagnosed early, and most women are not aware of the signs and symptoms of the disease. A women's risk of getting ovarian cancer during her lifetime is about 1 in 78, and her chance of dying from the disease is about 1 in 108.

Established in 2011, the Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance is a statewide organization, headquartered in Ann Arbor, that strives to save women's lives by promoting the early detection of ovarian cancer and improved treatment outcomes. MIOCA raises awareness of ovarian cancer, provides resources and support to survivors and their families, advocates both locally and federally, educates Michigan communities, and funds innovative ovarian cancer research.

More information on MIOCA can be found at  
[www.mioca.org](http://www.mioca.org) / [info@mioca.org](mailto:info@mioca.org)

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